



CIRCUIT COURT
ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA

THOMAS H. WILLIAMS
CIRCUIT JUDGE

LISA GRIER
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Dear Parent/Guardian:

You are receiving this letter because the Escambia County School District has identified a potential problem with your child's school attendance. Children who are 6 years of age by February 1st of any school year, or who are older than 6 years of age but who have not attained the age of 16 years, except as otherwise provided by statute, must attend school regularly during the entire school term. This is called the Compulsory School Attendance Law.

If your child misses 1 day of school without a valid excuse, your child is truant. If your child misses 15 days of school in any 90-calendar days, he/she is at a risk of being adjudicated Truant.

I am the Circuit Judge responsible for hearing cases of alleged truancy in Escambia County. As such, I want you to be aware how serious the issue of truancy is viewed and the potential consequences if your child's attendance does not improve.

Everyone knows the importance of a good education in today's world. The Florida Legislature has codified the importance of school attendance in Section 1003.26 Florida Statutes as follows:

The legislature finds that poor academic performance is associated with nonattendance and that school districts must take an active role in promoting and enforcing attendance as a means of improving student performance. It is policy of the state that each district school superintendent be responsible for enforcing school attendance of all students subject to the compulsory school age in the school district and supporting enforcement of school attendance by local law enforcement agencies.

When a child is adjudicated Truant, the parent is subject to certain consequences unless the situation is remedied. *Consequences to parents* may include a range of penalties from imposition of community service hours to being sentenced to time in the county jail.

I hope you will take this matter seriously, and that you and the School District can resolve this problem. If, however, you cannot resolve the problem, and your child remains truant, rest assured that the full force of the legal system will be used to get your child back in school.

I truly hope this sanction will not be necessary in your case, and that you and the School District successfully solve the current problem.

Sincerely yours,

Thomas H. Williams
Circuit Judge